



Governor Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg
San Wong, Director

ICSAA

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans

4th Quarterly Meeting

June 26, 2020

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Teleconference

Due to Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID 19)

Teleconference instructions:

Conference call in number: 1-866-685-1580

Conference code: 5152813855

Minutes

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 1:07 PM by Chairperson Ahmadu Baba-Singhri

Present

Ahmadu Baba-Singhri, Lynn Sutton, Rosalind Fox, Monica Mead

Absent

Kenneth Morris, Matthew Gibson

Staff

Monica Stone, Kim Cheeks

Welcome/Introductions

Meaghan O'Brien – Representative from the Governor's Office

Charles Hill, Iowa Civil Rights Commission

Skylar Mayberry-Mayes, Des Moines

Anderson Sainci, Dubuque

Approve Minutes of May 15, 2020

Motion to approve minutes as presented by Sutton, 2nd by Fox, approved unanimously.

Financial report

Stone, referenced copy of budget in the packet for Community Advocacy and Services (CAS),

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informing that legislative session has adjourned, and a status quo for the next fiscal year was approved, which is routine.

Reports

No oral reports were given.

Written reports submitted by Stone (Director/Division), Cheeks (Office), and Baba-Singhri.

Old Business

1. Letter to Governor Reynolds – COVID 19 update (*Gov. Reynolds Invited*)

Governor Reynolds was not able to attend, due to being out of the state. Dr. Baba suggested re-inviting her to the next meeting to share her observations about the letter. Stone reminded the participants that Meaghan O'Brien was on the call representing the Governor's office. Ms. O'Brien said she had nothing to say about the letter and was looking forward to listening to the meeting conversation.

2. George Floyd death, Protests and Police-Black Community Relations and Policy

Dr. Baba included in his report some of the movements going on in Des Moines. He questioned what can the commission do in response to police reform. Sutton, commission look to see if there is a comprehensive plan throughout Iowa. In some areas there may be a plan, if so, commission should review. Also look at what is the protocol for filing a citizen complaint, is it user-friendly, training practices within police departments, and get the basic knowledge of workings of the departments. Fox, makes sense to partner with other organizations already working on this, to increase the support and efforts, to create cohesion. The more involved, hopefully increase the momentum e.g. NAACP, and other organizations ACLU, etc. Baba suggests reaching out to the different organizations to meet with them. Cheeks will get the contact information for the NAACP to the commission. Cheeks mentioned the complaint received about mistreatment the youth received from law enforcement at a Black Lives Matter protest. Dr. Baba suggests to check with other organizations to see if they are meeting with law enforcement and meet with entities as a whole. Sutton, suggests commission sit and meet with groups and feels there is strength in numbers and would be beneficial to come up with cohesive and unified plan. Fox agreed with that suggestion. The commission all agreed this would be the plan moving forward.

3. DHR Board Meeting update

Dr. Baba included the update in his written report. Most of the discussion was about DHR's response to COVID 19, and the efforts government is working on together to address the pandemic. Stone pointed out the report that was all received, added to packet. DHR looked at where the disparities were from community feedback. How the key areas were identified; access to information, key resources available, rights in the workplace, what public health would like over time. DHR worked to increase access to government resources and ensure they were understandable, language access, translated/and used common terms to understand, community action agencies assisted with dissemination throughout state, worked with Iowa Utilities Board to refrain shut-offs, and moratorium. After crisis began, Stone and Central Administration observed Government's response needed to be efficient and rapid response was key. They figured out to serve those who were impacted most were the most important. Dr. Baba questioned was the money for COVID 19 available and was the information getting to the people? Stone replied, most of money went to the Low-income heating assistance program (LIHEAP). Money is income-based for heating bills through the winter months – the guidelines to apply were expanded for this funding. Dr. Baba questioned how the government is reaching those who do not have access to the internet? Stone explained, Community Action Agencies (CAA) are regional and in most counties in the state and were reaching those accessing the services. They have other services such as food bank, clothing, and the assist with application for funds available. Baba would like to see data on who received the funds so that we can see who is actually receiving the funds. Stone said the CAA's do robust recording, and she will check to see

what reporting is available. She also suggested the commission seek Bill Brand, the administrator for CAA to come and present to the commission at the next meeting. She also mentioned going to the DHR website and look at the reports listed under CAA division. Sutton questioned, in the past LIHEAP was not able to serve those undocumented? Stone will research and report back.

4. Speaker series discussion – Sioux City (canceled) Reschedule the Lunch & Learn series, during the pandemic how will it be addressed?

Dr. Baba sought feedback from the commissioners on this topic. Sutton offered, in light of COVID 19, maybe look at holding a teleconference to hear concerns from the public in Sioux City. Mead's hometown, she agreed with teleconference idea and making sure the community can participate. Sutton feels if there are issues, then we should do something soon, rather than wait. The consensus of the commission was to set a date, hold quarterly meeting, and invite the leaders of the community to the lunch and listen discussion.

New Business

No new business.

Public Comment

Charles Hill, ICRC – wanted to remind the commission about employment opportunities within the civil rights commission, who are looking for diverse applicants to fill positions, and to contact him or apply through state of Iowa DAS website. He will also send available openings to Cheeks.

Fox – informed us she has been appointed by the Governor to serve on the Economic Recovery Advisory Board. There are seven different workstreams, she will be on education, and plans to leverage her voice and bridge gap for blacks in equity across the state. If you have any input or interested in serving, please get information to her.

Baba opened up for comments or observations from Ms. O'Brien about the meeting or working with the commission to ensure the voices are heard from the black community. She reiterated she came to listen and hear from us and is looking forward to continued conversation and partnerships of those in the community. Baba stressed we need voices and recommendations for policies to heard. He asked what was the best way to get input to the governor. She feels the commission is already taking an active role in that effort.

Next Meeting

No date was set. Cheeks will send out potential dates.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Sutton, 2nd by Fox, approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Cheeks

Recorder